

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T SEOUL 9075

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, KS, US
SUBJ: WITHDRAWAL OF KCIA FROM US.

REF: SEOUL 8920

1. OVER WEEKEND, I SAW FOREIGN MINISTER PRIVATELY TO REVIEW RECENT DECISIONS BY ROKG ON WITHDRAWAL OF KCIA FROM US. FONMIN WAS NATURALLY QUITE PLEASED BY DECISION BOTH ON WITHDRAWAL OF KCIA FROM POSTS OUTSIDE WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK AND RESTRICTION OF OPERATIONS TO STRAIGHT INTELLIGENCE. HE SAID DECISION HAD BEEN MADE PERSONALLY BY PRESIDENT PARK AND WOULD STAND, ALTHOUGH KCIA NOT SATISFIED.

2. FONMIN SAID THAT PRESIDENT'S SON-IN-LAW, AMBASSADOR HAM, HAD PLAYED INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN PRESIDENT'S DECISION. IN PARTICULAR, HE WAS ABLE TO TALK PRIVATELY TO PRESIDENT PARK AND APPRISE HIM OF DETAILS OF KCIA ACTIVITY, WHICH PRESIDENT NOT PREVIOUSLY AWARE OF. ONCE PRESIDENT HAD FULL INFORMATION ON KCIA ACTIVITIES IN US, HE ACTED VERY QUICKLY.

3. FONMIN THOUGHT THAT, IN FACT, KCIA ACTIVITIES IN US HAD DECLINED IN RECENT YEARS AFTER ARRIVAL OF AMBASSADOR HAHM. HAHM EXERCISED CONSIDERABLY MORE CONTROL OVER KCIA THAN HIS PREDECESSOR, HIM TONG-CHO. HOWEVER,

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AMBASSADOR HAHM IS NEVERTHELESS VERY DISCOURAGED BY RECENT

ATTACKS ON KCIA AND OTHER KOREAN ACTIVITIES IN US. HE TAKES PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR NOT PREVENTING OR OTHERWISE SOFTENING PRESENT CRITICISM OF ROKG. FONMIN INDICATED THAT HAHM HAS ASKED TO BE RECALLED AS RESULT AND HE ANTICIPATES HAHM WILL LEAVE WASHINGTON, ALTHOUGH TIMING INDEFINITE. INFORMATION ON HAHM'S DEPARTURE SHOULD BE KEPT VERY CLOSELY.

4. COMMENT: AS YET, THERE IS NO INCLINATION ON PART OF ROKG TO MAKE PUBLIC DECISIONS ON KCIA OR REMOVAL OF GENERAL YANG, OR OTHERWISE ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY "MISTAKES" MADE BY KOREAN AGENTS IN US. FONMIN, WHILE RECOGNIZING ADVANTAGES IN PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF REGRET, SAID THAT INTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS INHIBIT ANY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF KCIA ERRORS. NEVERTHELESS, WE UNDERSTAND SOME KEY KOREANS ARE PRIVATELY URGING SUCH A STEP AS MEANS OF IMPROVING KOREAN IMAGE IN US.
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